

# UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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Up until 1967 travel in my life had been restricted to professional engagements -- concert tours or teaching engagements -- with an occasional vacation in Montana to visit family and old haunts. I had been in every state but four - Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and South Carolina (before Alaska and Hawaii were part of us). I had also traveled somewhat in Canada.

Travel in the States is impossible during the month of August when one has to rely on whatever is available to go on. Tours are just trips, badly managed with poor guides (I must except those in Glacier Park and the Canadian Parks) and poor service and accomodations. Not that they could not be better with better planning. Our last trip to Yosemite was a disaster and has discouraged me from ever touring in the States again.

So, when freed from all family responsibilities in 1966, I decided to find out what I was missing on the other side of the Atlantic. In 1967, my first trip to Europe took me to Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal. That was indeed an ideal trip in every respect. This year -- ten years later -- was my seventh crossing and equally as enjoy-able. Since the first we have visited fifteen countries by air, rail or boat. Each year I like to go back to one place I am familiar with and then try a few new ones. However this year after a very hard season we knew we would be very tired (it had not been one of our best years) and did not want it to be a strain. We visited London with a tour of Southwest England, Munich and Lucerne with an Europabus tour through a great part of Switzerland. No tour either in Europe or the USA has equaled the "Old Romantic Tour" we had in Germany in 1967. I wonder if it is wonderful today. Tours today have all gotten

more commercial, stopping only to sell souvenirs and local merchandise. Often they make a short trip one day to sell yet another tour costing more. Both tours this year did a great job of frustrating all the photographers by whizzing past all the special scenic spots.

Money was also a frustration this year with the dollar only worth fifty cents. Everyone led us to believe that England was cheap - we did not find it so. In Germany and Switzerland the prices were astronomical for Americans. We were told that salaries were comparatively higher in these countries. They would have to be for their people to exist. If one does not travel just to eat fancy meals, or buy expensive gifts, or replenish their tired wardrobe with an elegant new one, there was no real problem. In the stores I do not believe I ever saw such quality material in clothing as in Germany; but one did not see that quality worn by Germans on the streets.

London, this season was shocking because of what is happening to it. Thirteen million people living in the city and a possible six million visitors. The streets were filthy and crowded with visitors and immigrants with a large rude element. One of their papers stated that their Pakistani population had reached 1,770,000 and, add to that Hindus and other dark races and you have an idea of their problem.

There are many Arabs but they live in the best hotels and move about in large limousines driven by chauffeurs. English is not a language one hears on the streets. In London if one stands still a moment you are heading another queue and Londoners are very proper and polite about respecting their place and your place in a queue. Not so the Pakistanians, who storm the buses like a pack of wild beasts.

London does have the greatest theatre in the world and we thoroughly enjoyed this part of our visit. Absolutely great was - "Wild Oates - or the Strolling Gentleman", a play written by John O'Keefe in 1790 - an Irishman said to be the English Moliere. The Royal Shakespeare Company played it superbly. If, to find real humor in this modern world, it is necessary to go back to 1790 - what in the world are we waiting for - let's go back! This was a fabulously entertaining evening of honest humor in light, careless laughter, and in pleasant exaggeration of humor O'Keefe has no equal. No labor or contrivance in his scenes, but the drollery of his subjects seems to strike irresistibly upon his fancy and run away with his discretion as it does ours. It was played to the hilt by superlative acting down to the smallest part.

The modern amusement of prying into the private lives of others is the premise of that much overrated musical "Chorus Line". It is an extremely maudlin conception of the the dance world for sick minds. The production is special but the score is devoid of any music worth remembering. The embarrassment of the psychoanalysis scenes is absurd and something the average dancer would not tolerate for a moment in a tryout.

A very different evening was John Curry's ice show at the Palladium with Choreography by John Butler, Ronald Hynes, John Curry and Norman Maen. Norman Maen's "Afternoon of the Faun" was absolutely stunning, an exquisite experience in the theatre. Curry himself is very musical and in his choreography he is concerned with creating a beautiful and total performance. His "Petite Suite" by Debussy with Harp accompaniment for three girls was everything one would like dance to suggest - movement that reaches and reaches. There seems to be no movement of the body that Curry cannot do easily on skates. His attitude and Arabesque positions would make most dancers envious.

Among the many choices one had in the London Theatre, our last choice was to see Glynis Johns in "Cause Celebre" by Terrence Rattigan. The play is a tour de force for her and an intense and fascinating performance she gave. We left the Theatre in pouring rain to

battle the Pakistanians for a bus back to the hotel.

The museums are always a lure for us, both the National Gallery and the British Museum. Both familiar from previous visits - like revisiting Michaelangelo's "David" in Florence, I must always see the Elgin Marbles and especially the "River God" - the Chinese porcelains - the Assyrian friezes - and the Egyptian exhibits each time I am there. On this day we met Dusty Worral Pierce, and old friend from the days of "Carousel" and "Brigadoon". Enjoying a chatty lunch at the famous Fortnum and Mason's restaurant. The next day, we braved the train to see her at her home in Wellyn Herts. Then, in the pouring rain, she drove us to see Hattfield House. It is a sumptuous Palace which was once the home of Queen Elizabeth. Somehow, the Palace reflects the taste of a man, rather than that of a woman. It has massive furniture, carved wood-work, plaster designs, painted and beamed ceilings, Brussels tapestries and many, many portraits. One portrait is of Elizabeth, shown in a dress covered with eyes and ears to suggest that she saw and heard everything that happened in her kingdom.

The tour of southwest England through Surrey, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall was a delight. The countryside is a crazy quilt of greens, soft yellows and brown patches with farmhouses nestled alongside of forests - and always with many flowers...in their gardens... on the hillsides and at the edge of the roads. Each village had its famous Cathedral but Exeter was by all odds the most impressive. It boasted the longest stretch of Gothic vaulting in the world. The vaulting and horizontal striations of Purbeck Marble columns give the affect of an avenue of tall palm trees. Other highlights were the charming fishing village of Clovelly; the city of Bath, with the old Roman baths; the Stonehenge monuments; the ruins of an old cathedral in Salisbury, destroyed by Henry the 8th in the religious wars; and the Old Coach House where we bedded one night in Bude.

One cannot write about England without mentioning the flowers. English botanists in the early days traveled all over the world

gathering plants to send back to England, so that today the Buddlea, a native of China now grows wild in this country; as does the Fuschia. Every yard, however small, has its bed of roses. Somehow, I felt this year that the huge, wondrous Hydrangeas had taken over the roses' popularity with their great explosion of blossoms. This year, to honour their Queen, gardeners went wild with designed flower beds to represent clocks, crowns, flags and other patriotic emblems - mostly red, white and blue.

One tragic thing noticed everywhere in England was the great areas of dead trees. In some areas, especially around Salisbury as many as 75 percent of these dead trees silhouetted the skyline. They were not just elms, but also sycamores, beeches and oaks. They attribute it to lumber brought in from the States during the war. This is hard to believe. What it does look like is the result of "fall-out" from some mishap in scientific experimentation. No one seemed willing to talk about the trees.

From London we had a pleasant flight to Munich where we were to spend five days visiting the Galleries, strolling through its handsome streets and visiting Pat Downey's sister and brother-in-law at their handsome, new home in Geretaried. Paul and Tommy, their two beguiling children, were the center of attention with their bright charm.

Most of Munich is very familiar to us but we did see, for the first time, that enchanting Residenz Theatre Bud Tygett told us so much about. What an experience it would be to see a performance of "Così fan Tutti" on that stage. The Residenz Museum was adjacent to it and this too was a worthwhile two hours viewing its fabulous collection of artifacts. Naturally we had to revisit the Alte Pinckothek to see its great Rubens and Murillo collections. This museum really has some of my favorite Botticelli, Lippi and Da Vinci - not many but very special ones.

We walked the spectacular Nymphenburg Palace Gardens from one end to the other; an unbelievable place in the midst of a large city. Last year when we were here the Theatner

Kircke was being restored and this year the interior was gloriously white. It is easily one of the world's most stunning churches. Near it, in the evening, a couple of street musicians were playing Bach, Mozart and Schubert with flute and guitar. The crowd around them was the most enthusiastic and by far larger than any crowd for the Pop-kids with their twangtwangs. A rain storm drove us for shelter into a magnificent collection of art from Japan, China, Thailand, India and Persia at the Museum fur Woeke Kunde. We found out later that it was highly advertised. Zither music accompanied most of our evening meals - its music does not blot out conversation and comfortably fills the silences.

The seven days in Switzerland were dream-like when looking at the scenery but the merchants and hotel managers can really outdo the French. In Geneva for one night we paid seventy-five dollars (later we heard that almost everyone paid a different price) because we were to connect up with a tour the next morning. I must hasten to say that this was not true at the Grand National Hotel in Lucerne. It is the last hold out of graciousness and elegance. Immediately upon entering your room, a basket of fresh fruit comes from the management and moments later, flowers. A used towel seemed to disappear as you laid it down.

The tour took us through Nyon, Morges, Lausanne, Montreaux, Gruyeres, Fibourge and that delightful village of Lungern, destroyed in a landslide a few years back - now rebuilt and even in the pouring rain, it was a sight to behold. Early on the first day of the tour we visited the Chateau de Chillon made famous by Lord Byron in his poem "The Prisoner of Chillon". The vineyards around Lausanne, covering every inch of ground from the top of the hills down to the roadside, attest to the industrious level of the Swiss farmers. Ireland may be green but I never saw so many shades of green as in this country. The village of Gruyeres on a mountainside was the cheese center, so what did we have to eat on our lunch break but cheese souffle. A very picturesque village with typical 'Switzerland' buildings,

smothered with red geraniums from every window.

Berne is very special and one town I hope to return to another time. It is an ancient city, built between the 12th and 18th centuries. It is still the fine old city of bygone days. The ancient streets and arcades, fountains and oriel windows, cellars and towers are very real. Berne lies on the River Aare, affectionately embracing the city in its great natural loop; a river that has moulded Berne and protected it. There are said to be spectacular mountains about it but we could not see them for the rain and fog. The bear is the symbol for the city and a park cherishes 28 to 30 who are fantastic performers -- and beggars too.

We were in Bern August 20th - my father's 103rd birthday and since his death, wherever I've been, in any part of the world, it has rained cats and dogs. I always like to think the skies grieve for him -- he was such a grand man. In his lifetime he said the mid-August storms were the equinoctial storms.

The tour ended in lovely Lucerne, where we were to be at the Grand National for four days before returning to Chicago via, Zurick, and Amsterdam. Here we were near enough to Basil to take a train one morning to visit with Diane and Dan Reily. We were happy to see them looking so well and happy with their new company. Had lunch with them between the morning and afternoon rehearsals and they were full of questions of friends back home. Heinz Spoerli, their Ballet Master, spent much time with us complimenting them on their work -- so their year looks bright. The rehearsal was of a work by Glazounov, in the process of being choreographed. Only English was spoken throughout, as Spoerli pulled interesting steps and lifts out of the air.

Lucerne we had pretty well seen on previous trips but did a good job of going over it again. On our last day we took a boat trip around beautiful Lake Lucerne - or in their language, "Vierwaldstattersee" - up to the village of Waggio and back. With all the swans and ducks, one could easily imagine being in "Swan Lake" - but then "Swan Lake" is really in the state of Montana -- you may not know that -- but it is!

The only blight on the entire trip was landing at the International Airport at O'Hare. We were the second of five 747s to land at once. O'Hare's domestic flights are about the greatest, last month a total of 7,910 flights -- seems impossible. And O'Hare handled 47 million people in the last year. The International Airport has not kept up with the growth of air traffic and the harassed immigration officials are not as pleasant as they are in other countries.